DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 393 CE 077 306

TITLE	Charter Schools. Leveraging Business Expertise To Improve Student Achievement. Successful Strategies Series.
INSTITUTION	National Alliance of Business, Inc., Washington, DC.; Business Coalition for Education Reform.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	25p.; For related documents, see ED 414 365-366, ED 414 370, ED 415 297, and CE 077 307-308.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Alliance of Business, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005; Tel: 800-787-2848 (Toll Free); http://www.bcer.org
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Charter Schools; *Corporate Support; Educational Benefits; Educational Legislation; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; Financial Support; Leadership; *Partnerships in Education; *School Business Relationship; Strategic Planning; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides business leaders and coalitions with information and resources they can use to support charter schools in their own communities. Section 1 provides a brief overview of the charter school movement and discusses the key features of charter schools, which are self-managed public schools that operate through performance contracts with a sponsoring agency (such as a state or local school board or university) and generally receive a greater degree of autonomy concerning state rules and regulations in exchange for a high degree of accountability. In section 2, the following components that are essential to a charter school's success: demonstrated results; satisfied customer base established through competition; defined market niche; quality employees; and rapid innovation. Section 3 highlights different strategies and examples of businesses forging partnerships with charter schools. Six strategies that businesses can use to get involved in the charter school movement are identified in section 4: support charter school legislation; sponsor or start a charter school; inform and ensure a relevant curriculum; participate in the school governance structure; offer work-based learning opportunities; and provide resources, capital, and expertise. Concluding the booklet are the addresses of 12 organizations with information on charter schools and 16 endnotes. (MN)

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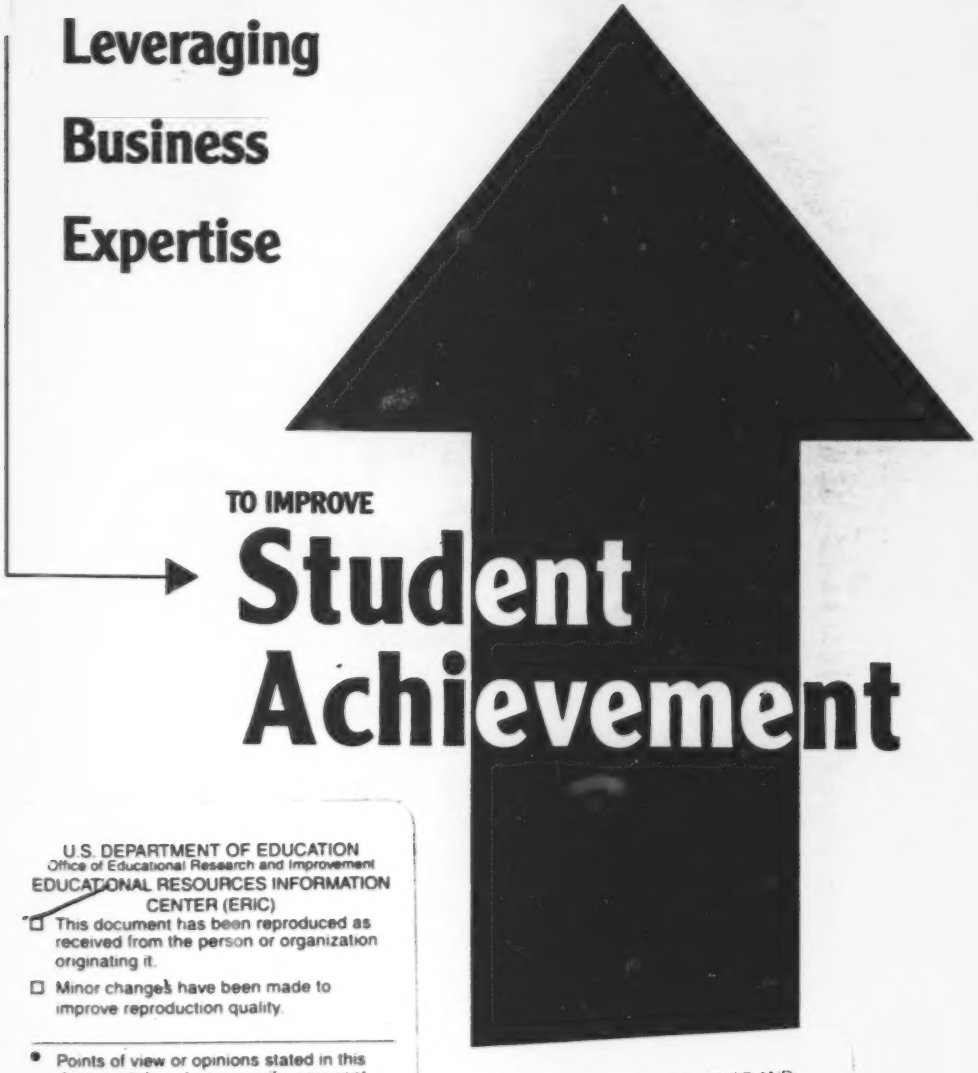
Charter Schools

Leveraging Business Expertise



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As part of the "Successful Strategies" series, this Business Coalition for Education Reform publication provides business leaders and coalitions with information and resources they can use to support charter schools in their own communities. It was adapted from several resources including *"Charter Schools: An Analysis of Selected Legislative Approaches,"* an unpublished work by Anne M. Castle submitted to the National Alliance of Business, and materials from *Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success Through Business-Linked Charter Schools*, a project managed by the National Alliance of Business, Public Policy Associates and Michigan Future, Inc. and funded by the United States Department of Education. *Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success Through Business-Linked Charter Schools* examines charter schools which have forged effective business partnerships. Using this research, as well as best practices from the school-to-work movement, the project will create technical assistance materials for businesses and charter schools. For more information on *Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success through Business-Linked Charter Schools*, please contact Diana Schloegel at the National Alliance of Business (202/289-2888).

Primary research and writing for this publication were completed by Anne Castle and Diana Schloegel. Support was provided by Shannon Dunphy. Graphic layout was done by Bill Wright at Clark's Litho. We would like to thank our reviewers: Robert Morgan, The Council of Growing Companies; Liza McFadden, Florida Department of Education, Office of Business and Education Alliances; Julia Saylor-Plumhoff and Bill Pretzer, Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village; Mike Schmidt and Wendy Pittman, Ford Motor Company; Bryan Hassel, Public Impact; Nancy Hewat, Public Policy Associates; Barbara O'Brien, Colorado Children's Campaign; Susan Otterbourg, The Conference Board; Lorie Sims, The Renaissance Charter School; Meghan Walsh, Georgia Partnership for Education Excellence; Ronald R. Russo, Charter School of Wilmington; Steve Mullin, Washington Roundtable and Michelle Goddard McNiff, the Public School Forum of North Carolina. For more information about the "Succ_ssful Strategies" series or additional BCER resources, please contact Karen Larson (202-289-2903) or Shannon Dunphy (202-289-2918) at the National Alliance of Business.

Introduction

To succeed in the rapidly changing workplace, young people need more advanced academic skills and knowledge than ever before. Unfortunately, too many students are completing school without these crucial abilities and are poorly positioned for either post-secondary education or a job. Now more than ever, business and education leaders, governors, policy makers, teachers and parents must work together to improve the quality of public education.

Business leaders are aware of this challenge, and have continually supported efforts to improve student achievement. The business community has played a significant role in education reform through its involvement in strategies such as:

- focusing on the professional development of educators;
- using school records in the hiring process;
- encouraging schools to make school records meaningful for employers;
- applying quality management skills, principles, techniques, and practices to restructure the organizational design of public school systems; and
- developing school-to-career initiatives to equip individuals to reach higher levels of academic achievement and workforce preparation.

To complement these initiatives, many business leaders are participating in the development and support of charter schools. These public, yet entrepreneurial, schools are a means for the business community to assist in the development and implementation of innovative practices, such as those listed above, that will improve student achievement.

This booklet is divided into four sections:

Section I provides a brief overview of the charter school movement;
Section II shows the connection between businesses and charter schools;
Section III highlights different strategies and examples of businesses forging partnerships with charter schools; and
Section IV identifies strategies for getting involved in the charter school movement.

Additional resources are listed in the back of the brochure.

SECTION ONE

The Charter Movement: An Overview

In today's political climate, the public demands greater efficiency and effectiveness from its service delivery systems. As with the private sector, the public sector's "goal is to achieve better outcomes (satisfied customers, greater output, higher achievement, etc.) with fewer wasted resources. Such language [can] no longer [be] alien to our schools."[1]

"[A]ccountability is measured in feet. If people don't like what you are doing, they can walk to another school . . . and if you don't fulfill your charter (contract), it can be revoked."

— Ronald R. Russo, The Charter School of Wilmington, Delaware

Charter schools embrace this viewpoint and provide promising strategies for expanding options, achieving high standards and gaining measurable outcomes in public education. Charter schools have the following characteristics:

- They are self-managed public schools which operate through performance contracts with a sponsoring agency, such as a state or local school board or a university.
- They have performance contracts which outline the education plan, the pedagogical techniques, the means to evaluate measurable outcomes, and the organizational management and structures.
- Funding for these schools is usually provided through public school dollars, although some state charter laws permit charter schools to receive additional grant money.
- Charter schools have a greater degree of autonomy concerning state rules and regulations, with the exception of those standard state requirements governing school safety, civil rights, and financial disclosure. This autonomy is delegated to charter schools in exchange for a high degree of accountability. In fact, the survival of the charter school is contingent upon meeting or exceeding prescribed accountability measures that indicate student achievement.

Since the passage of Minnesota's charter school law in 1991, the charter school movement has gained tremendous momentum. Many states followed Minnesota's lead and passed their own charter school legislation including: California in 1992; Massachusetts, Michigan and Georgia in 1993; Arizona in 1994; and Delaware in 1995. Since then, the charter school movement has garnered strong bi-partisan support from President Bill Clinton, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, Former Education Secretaries William Bennett and Lamar Alexander, Democratic Governor Roy Romer of Colorado, and Republican Governor John Engler of Michigan. Promoting charter schools is also on the agenda of the National Education Association (NEA). It recently allocated $1.5 million for its *Charter School*

HELPING BUSINESSES AND CHARTER SCHOOLS BUILD EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success through Business-Linked Charter Schools, a project managed by the National Alliance of Business, Public Policy Associates and Michigan Future, Inc. and funded by the United States Department of Education, is examining charter schools which have forged business partnerships as a means of improving student learning and achievement. The research team plans to study the best practices from the school-to-work movement and use them to create technical assistance materials that businesses and charter schools can use to build effective educational programs in communities across the country.

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- Create a best practice framework for showing the range of options for joining business and charter schools;
- Identify national models whose mission, curriculum, governance structure, and community partnerships are committed to preparing youth for success in the workplace;
- Identify critical success factors in the development and operation of business-linked charter schools; and
- Create technical assistance materials for businesses and charter schools to build effective educational programs.

For information on Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success through Business-Linked Charter Schools, please contact Diana Schloegel at the National Alliance of Business at (202) 289-2888.

Initiative and is now asking charter school experts to assist educators who are starting charter schools.[2] As of June 1998, seven years after the first law was passed, charter schools are operating in twenty-three states and the District of Columbia, and serving over 166,000 students.[3]

Emerging data suggest that charter schools are spurring reform in traditional public schools. Innovations such as: longer school years, days and class periods; innovative approaches to learning; an integrated, interdisciplinary core curriculum; teacher autonomy; and strict codes of conduct are gaining increasing acceptance in part because of the charter school movement.

Reliable evaluations of charter schools provide the following profile.[4]

- **Most charter schools are small.** About 60 percent enroll fewer than 200 students, compared to only 16 percent of traditional public schools which have such small student bodies.[5] (*See Figure 1*)
- **Charter schools have, on average, a racial composition similar to statewide averages.** In fact, Massachusetts, Michigan and Minnesota charter schools have a higher percentage of students of color than traditional public schools in their respective states.[6]

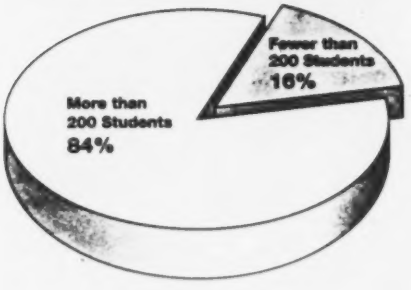
"We have to remember that the charter school movement is not about destroying public schools. Nor is [it] about saying that our teachers are failing us, or that bureaucracy is causing our problems or that parents do not care. No, what charter schools are really about is an opportunity--an opportunity that we have by living in this country and being able to vote to give ourselves and our children something better."

— **Yolanda Rivera, CEO**
Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association

- **Charter schools enroll a greater number of low-income students than traditional public schools.** Approximately 40.5 percent of charter school students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, an indicator of poverty. In traditional public schools approximately 36.6 percent of students are eligible.[7] (*See Figure 2*)
- **Charter school developers include diverse stakeholders — educators, business leaders, parents and community members.** Developers contend that charter schools provide them with the opportunity to pursue educational goals more effectively with fewer restrictions and stable financial support.[8]
- **Charter schools are indicating improved student achievement.** According to the Hudson Institute's *Charter Schools in Action: Final Report*, student academic performance improved dramatically. Among students who reported poor performance at their previous schools, 16.9 percent are now doing excellent work and 43.3 percent are doing good work.[9] In another study of thirty charter schools in nine states, 68 percent of charter schools appeared to be improving student achievement. These results were based on standardized tests as well as a variety of other measures, such as teacher evaluations, student portfolios and presentations.[10] (*See Figure 3*)
- **Charter schools are increasing levels of parental involvement.** In Massachusetts, 33 percent of charter school parents participate in school governance and 24 percent of charter school trustees are parents of enrolled students. Thirty-seven percent of charter school families volunteer and 55 percent of charter school parents report that they are more involved in their child's charter school than they were in their child's previous school. [11]

FIGURE 1

Percentage of *Public Schools* With Fewer than 200 Students



Percentage of *Charter Schools* With Fewer than 200 Students

Source: U.S. Department of Education, 1997

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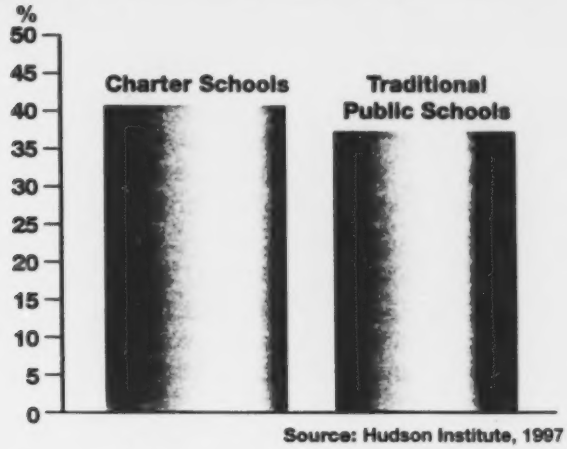
FIGURE 2

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free Lunch

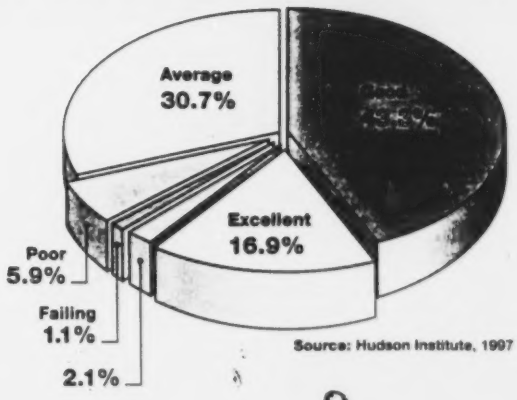


Source: Hudson Institute, 1997

- **Charter schools are improving students' interest in school.** Seventy-five percent of parents of Massachusetts charter school students report that their child's interest in learning has increased since entering a charter school. Seventy percent of charter school students confirm their interest in school has grown over the past year.[12]
- **Charter schools are enhancing teachers' level of satisfaction.** Over 90 percent of teachers are satisfied with their charter school's educational philosophy, size, colleagues, and students; and over 75 percent of teachers are satisfied with their school's administrators, degree of teacher decision-making, and the challenges associated with starting a new school.[13]

FIGURE 3

Percentage of Students Doing Poorly in Their Previous Schools Who Are Now Performing on a Level Described as...



Source: Hudson Institute, 1997

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SECTION TWO

Charter Schools and Business: A Natural Connection

Charter schools are an attractive way for businesses, especially those committed to innovative practices in their companies and in schools, to become involved in education reform. Many critical factors which contribute to successful businesses are also essential for effective charter schools, creating a natural environment for business support and leadership. These components include:

- **Demonstrated Results** — Charter schools are required to demonstrate positive results in student achievement in exchange for deregulation.
- **A Satisfied Customer Base Established Through Competition** — Charter schools operate in a market in which students and parents have choices. With customers (parents, students, employers) on their governing boards, charter schools must be customer-focused.
- **A Defined Market Niche** — Charter schools must be clear about who they serve. Charter schools are similar to research-and-development centers where new models are tried out, not only for niche markets, but also for wide market penetration.
- **Quality Employees** — Charter schools are committed to employing a quality staff that is supported by feedback from formal and informal evaluations and peer coaching. Continuous staff development is essential to building a school which can deliver on the directives explicit in the school's charter.
- **Rapid Innovation** —Unencumbered by bureaucracy, charter schools are more likely to use and develop innovative approaches to achieving results. They are more flexible than most public schools and can shift approaches more quickly to address operational problems.[14]

Charter schools are an especially good option for businesses already interested in school-to-work because their flexibility, independence, innovative style, and opportunity for business impact on all aspects of the school's operation help to overcome many of the most common school-to-work problems such as scheduling, location, or learning approaches.

To some extent businesses can view charter schools as vehicles for addressing their human resource issues. Students who have been closely involved with a high quality business during their school years are likely to accept permanent employment following graduation.

There is no single, correct answer or recipe for involving businesses with charter schools. However, given the intense interest on the part of many employers and educators to improve education and career opportunities for youth, there is a spectrum of opportunities for engagement.

SECTION THREE

Involving the Business Community in the Charter School Movement

The business community recognizes the potential of the charter school movement and is already participating by:

- supporting charter school legislation;
- sponsoring or starting their own charter schools;
- informing and ensuring a relevant curriculum;
- participating in the governance structure of the schools;
- offering work-based learning opportunities; and,
- providing resources, capital, and expertise.

This section outlines these strategies and illustrates various ways in which the business community is leveraging its expertise to strengthen the charter school movement. Profiles are drawn from the Business Coalition for Education Reform (BCER)'s network of 350 state and local business-driven coalitions nationwide, and a project managed by the National Alliance of Business, Public Policy Associates, and Michigan Future, Inc.: *Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success Through Business-Linked Charter Schools.*

"Legislators across the board have begun to conclude that if we are to serve the true interests of our children, we must set aside some of the traditional dogma about public education. A comprehensive charter law is just the place to start."

— New York Assemblyman Roger Green (D)

Strategy One: Supporting Charter School Legislation

Since Minnesota enacted its charter school law in 1991, thirty-two states have enacted charter school legislation. The most recent states include Utah, Idaho, and Virginia, which adopted charter school legislation during its 1998 legislative session.

Charter school laws vary enormously from state to state in how they enable charter schools to capitalize on their autonomy, diversity, entrepreneurship, innovation, and accountability. Successful schools are more likely to emerge under state laws which:[15]

- Permit an unlimited number of charter schools to be established incrementally;
- Allow numerous entities other than the traditional state board or local school boards to act as authorizing bodies (e.g. community colleges, state public universities, and private colleges);

- Permit entities outside the public school system to apply for charter schools (e.g. businesses, non-profit organizations, community and state colleges, teachers and parents);
- Grant charter schools the right to contract with for-profit organizations to run the school;
- Require a diverse charter school board of directors representing key stakeholders such as teachers, business people, community members, parents and students;
- Delegate legal and fiscal autonomy to charter schools' boards of directors, i.e. the power to make policy and operational decisions, to devise hiring/firing practices for school administrators and teachers, to plan and manage the annual budget, and to solicit and accept grants; and
- Grant state "start-up" funds to all entities given a charter by approved authorizing bodies to cover planning, designing, and other related operational costs.

ADVOCATING FOR THE PASSAGE OF CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION

Although New York and Washington State have yet to pass charter school legislation, business coalitions are actively directing efforts toward that objective. **The New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce** involves more than 200 CEOs and 500 companies in education program initiatives and lobbying efforts for policy reform. The coalition was founded by David Rockefeller in 1979 to find solutions to problems in education, employment, and economic development. The Partnership is the leading business and civic organization in New York City and serves as a vehicle for lobbying for the passage of charter school legislation. The Partnership continues to campaign for charter schools by educating policy makers and community members about charter schools' innovative strategies for improving education within the public school system. *For more information please contact Luis Castro, Director of Policy for Education and Workforce Development, at (212) 493-7507.*

In Washington State, the **Washington Roundtable**, a public policy research and advocacy group comprised of chief executive officers of major companies in the state, has played an active role in the passage and implementation of Washington's 1993 standards-based reform law. That law established a process to set clear, rigorous academic standards in core subjects; create assessment and accountability systems which measure whether students are achieving these standards; and increase the autonomy of local schools, freeing them up to focus on assisting all students to achieve these standards. The Roundtable supports the adoption of charter school legislation because, done right, it believes charter schools are one means of achieving the local flexibility envisioned in Washington's education reform law. Consequently, the Roundtable has worked closely with Washington's governor and legislative leaders over the past several years to craft charter school legislation that enhances the implementation of standards-based reform by providing parents, students and teachers with alternative school choices while holding charter schools accountable for achieving the state's academic standards. *For more information please contact Steve Mullin, Vice President, at (206) 623-0180.*

IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE LEGISLATION

Florida's recently amended charter school law promotes business partnerships by, "encourag[ing] the formation of Business Partnership Schools or Satellite Learning Centers through charter school status." A Charter School-in-the-Workplace is established when a business partner provides the school facility to be used and enrolls students through a random lottery of employees' children.

Charter Schools-in-the-Workplace legislation took effect July 1, 1998. The Florida Office of School Choice and Charter Schools is working collaboratively with the **State Office of Business and Education Alliances (OBEA)** to develop promotional materials outlining the benefits of Schools-in-the-Workplace and to develop a standardized system of approach to businesses. OBEA is drawing on its experience with the Challenge Grants program, which requires a 60 percent match by businesses and includes satellite schools-in-the-workplace as one of three primary areas of innovative emphasis. OBEA has already assisted in the development of such satellites as:

- The Works Academy of Osceola High School in Kissimmee, Florida, where up to 40 students attend classes at the **Hyatt Orlando** and intern with the hotelier's many services, including guest services, sales, banquet services, administration, recreational facilities, and front desk.
- A satellite center of Rutherford High School (in Panama City, Florida) at nearby **Tyndall Air Force Base** for up to 45 students who attend classes at the base. One class is taught by base personnel from the Non-Commissioned Officer Training Center. Students also intern with a variety of base units.
- A satellite center of Sherwood Elementary (in Melbourne, Florida) at the **Brevard Zoo** where all four classes of fifth graders have the opportunity to spend nine weeks in residence at the Zoo (30 students at a time). Students spend mornings on academics and afternoons working with curators, assisting zookeepers and presenting tours of the Zoo as junior docents.

For more information on the Florida Department of Education's Office of Business and Education Alliances, please contact Liza McFadden, Director, at (850) 488-8385.

Strategy Two: Sponsoring and Starting Charter Schools

The vast potential of the charter school movement has inspired many businesses to start or sponsor charter schools. Through participating in the development of a charter school, businesses can help make sure that charter schools get the financial resources and expertise they need from day one.

PLAYING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

In Delaware, the **DuPont Company** played a vital role in passing the "Charter School Act of 1995," one of the "strongest" charter school laws in the nation.[16] The purpose, under this Act, is to "create an alternative to traditional public schools operated by school districts and to improve public education overall by establishing a system of independent 'charter' schools throughout the State."

Once charter school legislation was enacted in Delaware, The **DuPont Company, Bell Atlantic of Delaware, Delmarva Power, Hercules Incorporated, Medical Center of Delaware**, and **Zeneca, Inc.**, along with educators, parents and community leaders, founded and formed Delaware's first independently operated school, **The Charter School of Wilmington.** With a concentration on math and science, The Charter School of Wilmington prepares its diverse student population for success by setting high expectations for academic achievement, maintaining an environment conducive to learning and character development, and emphasizing the development of analytical and qualitative skills. The educational objectives are measured by preparing students who are technologically literate and able to understand and use computers and laboratory instruments; broadly educated in the humanities, math and science; able to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing; and prepared to succeed in college or on the job.

Although The Charter School of Wilmington's curriculum is math, science, and technology-oriented, it also has a solid grounding in traditional subjects such as English and social studies. For graduation, students are required to earn a minimum of twenty-four credits, ten of which must be met through math, science, and computer science courses. The school also offers a broad range of Advanced Placement courses and electives.

Learning at The Charter School of Wilmington does not occur in a vacuum. There is a strong emphasis on "real work experiences." Corporate sponsors, including each company's CEO, visit the school on a monthly basis to increase students' awareness about the world of work and to help students with their college and career plans. In addition to these on-site visits by corporate sponsors, upperclassmen participate in a career shadowing program throughout the school year. Students are matched with a corporate sponsor who serves as a mentor. This work-based approach provides students with opportunities to explore and understand career options.

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Moreover, these experiences help students connect their academic course work to real work experiences. This career shadowing program is complemented by summer internships.

Recent accomplishments include earning the highest writing assessment scores in 1997, having three ninth-grade math league teams currently ranked in the top three in the region and an upperclass team ranked number one, and receiving the highest student attendance rate in Delaware. *For more information please contact Ronald R. Russo, President, Charter School of Wilmington, at (302) 651-2727.*

The Henry Ford Academy of Manufacturing Arts and Sciences, located in Dearborn, Michigan, is a public charter high school sponsored by **Ford Motor Company and Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village**. The school opened in August, 1997 with 100 ninth-grade students selected by lottery and plans to reach its capacity of 400 students in the year 2000. The academy is the first charter school developed jointly by a major corporation, public education, and a non-profit cultural institution.

Ford has played a leading role in the creation of the Academy. As expressed by **Ford's Chairman, Alex Trotman**, "Ford's involvement in education reform extends far beyond the walls of our plants and offices. It's a matter of corporate citizenship—one of Ford's key business strategies. . . . **Ford Motor Company** wants to be a leader in developing and supporting powerful tools for quality schools. And we think the Henry Ford Academy will be a powerful tool." **Dr. Renee Lerche, Ford's Director of Workforce Development**, states that, "Ford Motor Company has a long history of workforce development . . . this Academy is a natural extension of that tradition. We want to be a catalyst for educational reform in the public school system that can be replicated in other communities."

Key elements driving the Henry Ford Academy include promoting and providing opportunities for innovation, recruiting and maintaining a diverse student body, using the community as a source of learning, engaging learners in the world around them, and fostering learners' capability to integrate knowledge and competencies to address work-based problems and tasks. In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum that emphasizes mathematics, science, and the humanities, students are also evaluated in the areas of technology, communication, thinking and learning, and personal management. The goal is to "develop and graduate young people who are ready for anything—college, skilled trade apprenticeships, or jobs in a global, technological workplace." In meeting this goal, business partners provide textbooks, supplies, hands-on activities for the curriculum and access to the latest technologies in communications, computers and applications to real-world problems. In addition to the academy's core curriculum, internships and job shadowing experiences are assigned to students.

The Academy's long-term vision serves as a national model for new teaching and learning strategies. Lessons learned from the Academy will be shared with educators, administrators, business leaders, parents, and other important stakeholders. *For more information please contact Julia Saylor-Plumhoff at (313) 982-6122.*

Strategy Three: Informing and Ensuring a Relevant Curriculum

By partnering with educators, business leaders can demonstrate the critical linkages between the world of academics and the world of today's changing workplace by making subjects come alive and helping students see the relevance of academics to their future in the workplace. Charter schools offer the business community a myriad of opportunities to inform curriculum and ensure that students are mastering crucial skills. At the Henry Ford Academy, for example, business practices, such as industry-specific skill sets, business standards, career preparation knowledge, employability skills, technology advancements and contextual and experiential learning opportunities are integrated into a charter school's curriculum and are improving student achievement (see *Playing a Leadership Role in the Development of Charter Schools* on pages 10 and 11).

ENSURING THAT ALL SCHOOLS BENEFIT FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Since the mid-eighties, the **Public School Forum of North Carolina** has served as a catalyst for school improvement efforts. As a result of the Forum's research and demonstration efforts, education reform policies in the areas of accountability, technology and school funding have strengthened North Carolina's education system. Currently, the Forum is managing a federally-funded research project on charter schools, **Project Connect.** This program aims to facilitate dialogue between charter schools and traditional public schools in a five-state area. Project Connect is coordinated through five coalitions, four of which have business leadership: **the Public School Forum of North Carolina, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Council for a Better Louisiana,** and **The South Carolina Business Center for Excellence in Education.** The project benefits from these business coalitions' extensive experience with working collaboratively with public and private groups.

Project Connect's goal is to ensure that public schools benefit from new ideas and charter schools learn from exemplary traditional public schools in an effort to avoid reinventing the wheel. Recent accomplishments include the Project Connect website (www.projectconnect.org) which provides a link between charter schools, traditional public schools, state agencies and charter resource groups throughout the five-state Project Connect network. Over the next year Project Connect will continue to bring together groups of charter school leaders, faculty members, parents and board members. The project will also reach out with speakers' bureaus, policy briefs, and newsletters to a broader audience of policymakers, state education agency officials, business leaders and others.

For more information on Project Connect or the North Carolina Public School Forum, please contact John Dornan, Executive Director, or Michelle Goddard McNiff, Director, Public Policy and Research, at (919)781-6833.

Many charter school boards are assigned the power to implement new pedagogical methods, to solicit and receive grants and gifts for educational purposes, and to enter binding contracts with individuals and entities for operation, management, and maintenance of the public charter school. Through serving on charter school self-governing boards, business leaders, with educators, community members, and parents, can inform academic program goals and learning standards that reflect both academic content and workplace skills, and can assist schools in implementing sound organizational and management practices. The increased autonomy and flexibility of charter schools offer business leaders an opportunity to play a significant role in the governance process.

HELPING TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT IMPACT CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Founded by the President and CEO of the Urban League, community leaders, and the Chairman of the Foundation for Florida's Future, the Liberty City Charter School opened in 1996 to serve at-risk children in grades K-3. By the year 2000, the **Liberty City Charter School** will service 200 children in grades K-5. The governing board is composed of representatives from private industries, small businesses, and a local community college. The charter school looks to the governing board, which has strong business representation, for assistance in overseeing operations, articulating the school's mission, and soliciting financial and in-kind donations. In addition to the prescribed role of the governing body, board members interact with students by serving as role models and setting high expectations for achievement and behavior. *For more information please contact Katrina Wilson at (305) 751-2700.*

Strategy Five: Offering Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Work-based learning opportunities help students achieve academic success while learning firsthand about the world of work. This exposure can occur in a variety of ways, from job shadowing experiences to structured internships. These programs allow students to spend quality time working and learning at the worksite. Young people are introduced to a particular industry and provided a unique chance to apply the academic and technical knowledge they have acquired in the classroom.

Many charter schools are incorporating the concept of school-to-work into their educational philosophies and curriculum. Some charter schools have a strong industry focus in their mission which emphasizes preparing students for specific careers linked to occupational certification and credentials. Other charter schools focus on teaching and learning within a focused career context (e.g., health care, manufacturing, finance, etc.) which supports and encourages students to explore and prepare for careers within broad industry sectors or occupational groups. There are other charter schools that promote educational achievement and lifelong learning through context-based instruction and experiential learning.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES TO PROVIDE WORK EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS

By securing business partnerships through advertising in the community and approaching specific businesses, the **Renaissance Charter School** established an employer bank of approximately 20 businesses. The school draws on these financial, manufacturing, computer, and retail businesses to provide internships for its students. Every student must complete an internship in order to graduate. There are two options for completing this requirement. Plan A involves working 15 hours a week throughout the school year. Plan B is designed for students to complete 200 hours of work over the summer. Each student must interview for their position, and the majority of students are paid. All students are evaluated by their employers. These internships were designed to give students exposure to the world of work and careers. *For more information please contact Lorie Sims at (972) 258-1198.*

Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools face unique challenges including locating a school site, acquiring collateral, obtaining start-up funds, and gaining community support. Across the nation, many business-led coalitions and individual businesses are contributing their expertise and garnering resources to strengthen charter schools in their communities.

ENABLING CHARTER SCHOOLS TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES THEY NEED

In North Carolina a number of the state's largest companies, including **BellSouth Foundation, NationsBank Foundation, Wachovia Foundation,** and **Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation** are financially supporting an independent non-profit organization, **The North Carolina Charter School Resource Center**, dedicated to supporting charter schools in the state. The Resource Center provides an opportunity to share information and issues with other charter schools, sponsors statewide charter school conferences, and directs charter school leaders to appropriate resources regarding curriculum models, professional development opportunities, funding sources, and leasing programs for school buildings. *For more information on the North Carolina Charter School Resource Center please contact Thelma Glynn at (888) 461-8824.*

The Charter School Resource Center of Texas, a non-profit, independent organization, was formed in 1997 by a group of Texas business leaders who understood the vision of charter schools and the significant impact these schools could have on improving the state's public school systems. These business leaders realized that charter schools would need access to a variety of resources in order to be effective and formed the Resource Center to fill that need. Staff members at CSRCT work directly with individual charter schools and the Texas Education Agency. The Center maintains an on-going dialogue with national and state charter school proponents and offers a variety of resources and services including:

- conferences
- workshops
- foundation and corporate outreach
- business outreach and partnerships
- publications
- technical assistance

The Center is funded by major donations from foundations and corporations across Texas such as **Houston Endowment, Shell Oil Company Foundation, Cimarron Foundation,** and **Exxon Education Foundation.** Foundations and corporations outside of Texas have also expressed an interest in supporting the center. The Center is governed by a diverse, nonpartisan board of individuals in leadership across the state. *For more information please contact Patsy O'Neill at (210) 348-7890.*

SECTION FOUR

How Business Leaders Can Support the Charter School Movement: Specific Strategies

There are a variety of ways for business leaders to support the charter school movement. Here's a quick list to get you started. For more detailed information on the charter school movement and how you can get involved, please refer to the resource section in the back of this brochure.

- Talk with your state charter school office to get more information.
- Contact a charter school in your area for more information.
- Support a charter school resource center.
- Assist in providing systematic leadership by allocating planning, human and financial resources to a charter school.
- Help with strategic planning, budget guidance and management systems for a charter school.
- Offer yourself for appointment or election to a charter school governing board.
- Inform educators about new technologies and workplace skills.
- Help a charter school design high academic standards that will help increase student achievement.
- Advise in professional development activities to bring teachers into the workplace.
- Collaborate in the creation of school and work-based curriculum.
- Provide site-visits and fieldtrips.
- Help to secure a facility for a charter school.
- Provide important resources such as technology supplies and technical assistance.
- Contribute professional time for technical assistance, career awareness presentations, student mock-interviews, etc.
- Offer internships, job shadowing opportunities, and mentorships to charter schools.
- Use student portfolios, exhibitions, transcripts, and attendance records in the hiring process for student employment.

SECTION FIVE

Resources

These organizations have information on charter schools which may be useful to you. Please contact them directly to find out more or to obtain the listed publications.

Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement
(CAREI) at the University of Minnesota
265-2 Peik Hal, 159 Pillsbury Dr., SE,
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Telephone: 612-624-0300
Web Site: http://carei.coled.umn.edu/charter.html
Web Site: http://carei.coled.umn.edu/CharterSchools/NatChrtr.html
* *Minnesota Charter Schools Evaluation: Interim Report*

Center for Education Reform
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 204,
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 800-521-2118
Web Site: http://edreform.com
* *Charter School Highlights and Statistics*
* *The Charter School Workbook: Your Roadmap to the Charter School Movement*

Charter Friends National Network
1355 Pierce Butler Route, #100,
St. Paul, MN 55104
Telephone: 612-644-5270
Web Site: www.charterfriends.org

Consortium for Policy Research In Education (CPRE)
University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education
3440 Market Street, Suite 560,
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325
Telephone: 215-573-0700
Web Site: http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre/index.html
* *Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities: Early Lessons from Charter Schools*

Hudson Institute
5395 Emerson Way,
Indianapolis, IN 46226
Telephone: 317-545-1000
Web Site: http://www.edexcellence.net/chart/charttoc.htm
* *Charter Schools in Action: Final Report*

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
1560 Broadway, Suite 700,
Denver, CO 80202
Telephone: 303-830-2200
Web Site: http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/c1schls.htm

Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research
Charter Schools Resource Center
85 Devonshire Street, Eighth Floor,
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: 617-723-2277
Web Site: http://www.pioneerinstitute.org
* *The Massachusetts Charter School Handbook*
* *Massachusetts Charter School Profiles, 1995-1996 School Year*

RAND Corporation
Institute on Education and Training
1700 Main Street, PO Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
Telephone: 310-393-0411
Web Site: http://www.rand.org/centers/iet

United States Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
600 Independence Avenue, SW,
Washington, DC 20202-0498
Telephone: 800-USA-LEARN
Web Site: http://www.ed.gov
http://www.uscharterschools.org
* *A Study of Charter Schools: First Year Report*

The following organizations are involved in *Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success Through Business-Linked Charter Schools:*

National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700,
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 800-787-2848
Web Site: http://www.nab.com/schooltowork/charterschools

Public Policy Associates
618 Seymour Ave.,
Lansing, MI 48933-1120
Telephone: (517) 485-4477
FAX: (517) 485-4488
www.publicpolicy.com

Michigan Future, Inc.
2901 Hubbard Suite 200,
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Telephone: (313) 769-6391
FAX: (313) 769-8810

Endnotes

1. Finn, CE., Jr. & Gau, R.L. "New Ways in Education." The Public Interest, 130, 1998, p.79.
2. Nathan, J "The Charter School Movement is Growing Because It's Working" [On-line]. Available WWW: http://edweek.org/ew/vol-16/21nathan.h16.
3. Center for Education Reform (1998, June). Charter School Highlights and Statistics [On-line]. Available WWW: http://edreform.com/pubs/chglance.htm/.
4. Center for Applied Research and Education Improvement (1996). Minnesota Charter Schools Evaluation: Interim Report. St. Paul, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development; Cheung, S. Murphy, M.E., Nathan, J. Making a Difference : Charter Schools, Evaluation and Student Performance. Minneapolis, MN: Center for School Change at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; Finn, C.E., Jr., Manno, B.V., Bierlein, L.A., & Vanourek, G. (1997, July). Charter Schools in Action: Final Report, Parts I-IV. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute; Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research. (1996, July). Massachusetts Charter School Profiles, 1995-1996 School Year. Boston, Massachusetts: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research; U.S. Department of Education. (1997, May). A Study of Charter Schools: First Year Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education; and Wohlsetter, P. & Griffin, N. (1998). Creating and Sustaining Learning Schools: Early Lessons from Charter Schools (CPRE Occasional Paper Series OP-03). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.
5. US. Department of Education. (1997). A Study of Charter Schools: First Year Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. A survey based on telephone interviews in the Spring of 1996 with 225 of the 252 charter schools operating in 1996 and on field visits to 42 of the 93 charter schools which had been opened for at least one year.
6. Ibid.
7. Vanourek, G, Manno, B.V., Finn, C.E., Jr., & Bierlein, L.A., (1997, June). Charter Schools in Action: Final Report, Part V. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, p. 2.
8. US. Department of Education. (1997). A Study of Charter Schools: First Year Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. A survey based on telephone interviews in the Spring of 1996 with 225 of the 252 charter schools operating in 1996 and on field visits to 42 of the 93 charter schools which had been opened for at least one year.
9. Finn, CE., Jr., Manno, B.V., Bierlein, L.A., & Vanourek, G. (1997, June). Charter Schools in Action: Final Report, Part I. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, p. 3.

10. Cheung, S, Murphy, E.M., and Nathan, J. Making a Difference: Charter Schools, Evaluation and Student Performance. Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Center for School Change at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.

11. Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research (1996, July). Massachusetts Charter School Profiles, 1995-1996 School Year. Boston, Massachusetts: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, p. 4. Survey included fifteen charter schools, with a sample size of 509 respondents in the Spring of 1996.

12. Ibid, p. 2.

13. Finn, CE., Jr., Manno, B.V., Bierlein, L.A. & Vanourek, G. (1997, July). Charter Schools in Action: Final Report, Part I. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, p.1. The Hudson Institute's Charter School in Action Project collected four sets of quantitative data of 50 charter schools enrolling 16,000 students in 10 states.

14. "Building Connections and Competencies: Ensuring Youth Success through Business-Linked Charter Schools," a project managed by the National Alliance of Business, Public Policy Associates and Michigan Future, Inc., 1998.

15. Center for Education Reform (1997). The Charter School Workbook: Your Roadmap to the Charter School Movement. Washington, DC: Center for Education Reform **and** Castle, A. "Charter Schools: An Analysis of Selected Legislative Approaches." Unpublished paper for the National Alliance of Business, Washington, DC, April 1998.

16. Center for Education Reform (1997). The Charter School Workbook: Your Roadmap to the Charter School Movement. Washington, DC: Center for Education Reform.

BUSINESS COALITION FOR EDUCATION REFORM
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 800-787-2848
Web Site: http://www.bcer.org

The BCER, a coalition founded and managed by the National Alliance of Business, is comprised of 13 national business-led organizations working in partnership with 350 state and local business-education coalitions to improve academic achievement for all students by supporting and expanding business involvement in education at the national, state, and local levels. The BCER supports efforts to: (1) raise academic standards for all students; (2) ensure standards reflect the knowledge and skills needed for workplace success; and (3) help the public understand the critical need for world-class academic standards and necessary changes for school systems to deliver them. Members include: American Business Conference, The Business Roundtable, Business-Higher Education Forum, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Committee for Economic Development, The Conference Board, Council on Competitiveness, The Council of Growing Companies, National Alliance of Business, National Association of Manufacturers, National Association of Women Business Owners, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Utility Business Education Coalition.

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